

# Project Execution - PM Elements

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## Corrective Actions

Initial Release	1.0
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### *The Best of Plans can go Wrong*

When all is said and done and a project still encounters problems, the actual problem needs to be sized and decisions made on corrective actions.

Corrective actions are defined as the steps and processes pursued to determine:

- If the project is still meeting its original objectives.
- If the issues are so great that the project must be completely replanned and another “go/no go” decision made.
- If the project may not meet the state organization’s business needs.

The corrective action process can go hand-in-hand with the change control process; however, the change control process is not intended to solve problems that need to be addressed in an urgent manner or where there is a question on the soundness of the project. In other words, many of the changes do not adversely impact the project if they are not implemented.

Problems that fall into the category of needing corrective action require quick action and are very sensitive.

### *Where Problems Come From*

Situations that normally require corrective actions fall into the following categories:

#### Internal

- A particular task is behind schedule or over budget; an analysis of how it impacts the overall project plan would be completed.
- A particular task was missed, with no work around, and it was on the critical path.
- A major milestone is missed.
- It appears that the functionality of the project does not meet objectives.

#### External

- A major technical problem with the selected technology may have surfaced as part of the Change Control Process, and the resolution to the problem does not allow the project to be developed as specified.
- The state organization environment has changed, and the current IT project is not part of the solution for meeting the business needs.

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### *External Problems*

External situations are the result of situations outside of the project. These situations are no less important than internal problems. Successful project completion means that the product resulting from the project will be put to use following the success factors defined in the project plan. If external users are unhappy with results, the project will not be successful.

### *Internal Problems*

All four of the internal situations identified above represent increasing severity for the project team and span a wide range of decision making processes, from simple additional attention at the status meeting to developing complete and detailed corrective plans, to stopping work orders. Each of these situations means that the project is falling further behind schedule and over budget.

A key part of project management is providing quick action to identified problems and developing successful corrective plans. Corrective action plans can take the form of replanning, reallocating resources, or changing the way the project is managed and organized.

The corrective actions available to the project manager center on cost, schedule, and technical performance parameters of the project. However, stakeholders and executive managers should also be involved at an early point in the process. They, too, have the ability to impact the corrective action process by shifting business priorities, reaffirming their support for the project, and showing commitment to having it replanned. If they are not brought in early, that support becomes harder to obtain.

### *Fix the Problem*

An effective control process doesn't just track, monitor, and review, but also re-directs the project if a major problem (loss of schedule and increased cost) occurs. The first rule is to try and protect the overall integrity of the project schedule.

The goals of the recovery plan are to:

- Fix the problem quickly.
- Limit the damage.

For example, an activity might be completed one week late, but the successor activities can maintain their completion dates, and the next major milestone date is stable. In this case, a short project review, a list of necessary actions, and a summary financial comparison to ensure the integrity of the budget are all that would be needed.

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### *Recovery Plans*

Detailed recovery plans should be put in place if a problem could cause harm to some aspect of the project. The plan should:

- Identify the owner of the recovery plan.
- Identify the sequence of activities that must occur to complete the resolution.
- Determine the dates when each activity of the plan will be started and completed, and identify the dependencies of each activity.
- Ensure that the appropriate people or teams approve the plan.
- Reflect the outcome, if the recovery plan is successful, in terms of schedule, activities modification, and cost.

The best plan does not just show that the problem is resolved, but indicates how it is resolved.

All recovery plans are tracked following the exception reporting requirement stated in the *Project Tracking and Monitoring* document and communicated in the status and executive meetings discussed in the *Project Reviewing* document of this section.